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News Release



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Reopens Public Comment on Status Reviews For 31 Species in California and Nevada

Service Requests New Scientific Information

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has re-opened public comment for 60 days on the initiation of status reviews for 31 species as required by the Endangered Species Act. The purpose of the reviews, first announced on July 7, 2005, is to ensure that the listing of the species as threatened or endangered is accurate and based on the best scientific and commercial data available, and whether the listing status should be considered for change.

The notice of re-opening was published in the Federal Register on November 3, 2005. The notice can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-21912.htm>

To accomplish this, the Service is requesting submission of any new information produced since the original listing of each of these 31 species. The new comment period closes January 3, 2006.

Under the Act, the Service maintains a list of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants. The Act requires that the Service conduct a review of listed species at least once every five years and determine whether or not any species should be removed from the list (delisted), or reclassified from endangered to threatened or from threatened to endangered. Delisting a species must be supported by the best scientific and commercial data available and only considered if such data substantiates that the species is neither endangered nor threatened for one or more of the following reasons:

- The species is considered extinct.
- The species is considered to be recovered.
- The original data available when the species was listed, or the interpretation of such data, were in error.

Any change in Federal classification requires a separate rulemaking process distinct from the status review.

To ensure that the review is complete and based on the best available scientific and commercial information, the Service is soliciting new information from the public, concerned governmental agencies, Tribes, the scientific community, industry, environmental entities, and any other interested parties concerning the status of these 31 species, all of which are currently listed as endangered or threatened. The Federal Register notice indicates where comments should be sent for each species.

These reviews consider the best scientific and commercial data and all new information that has become available since the listing. Categories of requested information include:

- Species biology, including population trends, distribution, abundance, demographics, and genetics.
- Habitat conditions, including amount, distribution, and suitability.
- Conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species.
- Threat status and trends.
- Other new information, data, or corrections, including taxonomic or nomenclatural changes, identification of erroneous information, and improved analytical methods.

Species in consideration in the notice for review are the Valley elderberry longhorn beetle, Smith's blue butterfly, Delhi Sands flower-loving fly, Morro shoulderband snail, giant garter snake, San Francisco garter snake, island night lizard, California least tern, least Bell's vireo, Chinese Camp brodiaea, Mariposa pussypaws, San Clemente Island Indian paintbrush, spring-loving centaury, Springville clarkia, San Clemente Island larkspur, Santa Barbara Island dudleya, Ash meadows gumplant, San Clemente Island woodland star, San Clemente Island lotus, San Clemente Island bush mallow, Amargosa niterwort, Eureka Valley evening primrose, Yreka phlox, Hartweg's golden sunburst, San Joaquin adobe sunburst, Santa Cruz Island rock-cress, Eureka Dune grass, Kneeland Prairie pennycress, Hidden Lake bluecurls, Red Hills vervain and Keck's checkerbloom.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.